

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 TRSE-00 SSC-01 AID-05
OMB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /086 W
-----171810Z 083729 /46

P R 171549Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9942
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY ACCRA
AMEMBASSY COTONOU
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MONROVIA
AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
AMCONSUL DOUALA
AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE
AMCONSUL IBADAN
AMCONSUL KADUNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 3044

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINR, CI
SUBJECT: NIGERIAN CABINET RESHUFFLE

REF: (A) LAGOS 2998 (B) LAGOS 1834 (C) STATE 58548

1. IN ANALYZING MARCH 15 FEDERAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL RESHUFFLE, WE
WOULD NOTE AT OUTSET THAT NO MEMBER OF RULING SUPREME MILITARY
COUNCIL (SMC) WAS DISMISSED OR DOWNGRADED. ONLY CHANGE INVOLVING
SMC MEMBER WAS TRANSFER OF MAJ. GEN. JAMES OLULEYE FROM ESTABLISH-
MENTS MINISTRY TO FINANCE, WHICH IS IN EFFECT A PROMOTION. THIS
MOVE GIVES SMC MORE DIRECT CONTROL OVER COUNTRY'S BUDGETARY
APPARATUS, AND CONVERSELY MAY EXPOSE SMC MORE DIRECTLY TO VIEWS OF
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TALENTED CIVILIANS WITHIN FINANCE MINISTRY.
SMC MAY ANTICIPATE NEED FOR DIRECT CONTROL OF FINANCE IN ORDER
TO REALLOCATE RESOURCES FOR CARRYING OUT WHAT REMAINS OF OVERLY
AMBITIOUS DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

2. OTHER MOTIVES FOR RESHUFFLE WOULD APPEAR TO BE:

A. REFURBISH FMG'S IMAGE. PUBLIC IS INCREASINGLY DISGRUNTLED WITH GENERAL INERTIA AND ATMOSPHERE OF CORRUPTION. THIS HAS BEEN MANIFESTED MOST STRONGLY IN CALLS BY STUDENTS (AND /NEW NIGERIA") FOR REPLACEMENT OF STATE GOVERNORS (REF B) STUDENTS SEE GOVERNORS AS STALE AND ENTRENCHED, DIPPING IN THE TROUGH AND BUILDING FIEFDOMS AFTER THE FASHION OF THEIR DISCREDITED PREDECSSORS. SMC HAS NOT RESPONDED DIRECTLY TO THESE COMPLAINTS (FOOLOING ANYONE ELSE'S ADVICE TO THE LETTER WOULD BE SEEN AS LOSING FACE), BUT IT HAS TAKEN PARALLEL INITIATIVE IN WEEDING OUT FEC.

B. COPE MORE EFFECTIVELY WITH INFLATION. JIRECT SMC RESPON- SIBILITY FOR MINISTRY OF FINANCE MAY ENABLE REGIME TO GRAPPLE MORE FORCEFULLY WITH THIS INTRACTABLE PROBLEM. APPEARANCE OF TAKING ACTION, HOWEVER, WILL BE RISKY SUBSTITUTE FOR GENUINE ACCOMPLISHMENT. SMC MAY SOON WISH IT HAD LEFT INFLATION PUZZLE IN HANDS OF CIVILIANS.

C. PURGE DISSIDENTS. EMBASSY HAS HEARD REPEATEDLY THAT HARUNA AND OBADA WERE UNHAPPY WITH THEIR EXCLUSION FROM SMC. HARUNA WAS ALSO REPORTEDLY UNHAPPY WITH LACK OF OPPORTUNI- TIES AT MINISTRY OF INFORMATION FOR SELF-ENRICHMENT. (OBADA, PRESIDING OVER ISSUANCE OF WORKS MINISTRY CONTRACTS, REPORTEDLY HAD NO SUCH COMPLAINTS.) RETIREMENT SERVES NOTICE ON THESE TWO SENIOR OFFICERS THAT THEIRAMBITION WILL NO LONGER BE COUNTENANCED. IT MAY GIVE PAUSE TO MAJGEN SHUMA, WHO HAS ALSO BEEN REPORTEDLY UNHAPPY WITH HIS NON-SMC ROLE.

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D. GIVE IMPRESSION OF STEADY MOVEMENT TOWARD CIVILIAN RULE. EXPLANATION GIVEN MARCH 16 BY /DAILY TIMES" (REF A) IS THAT SMC WISHES TO INVOLVE MORE CIVILIANS IN GOVERNMENT AS DATE FOR REVERSION TO CIVILIAN RULE APPROACHES. IN ACTUALLITY SMC PROBABLY HAS LITTLE CONCERN FOR PROPORTION OF CIVILIANS TO MILITARY IN HIGH COUNCILS OF GOVERNMENT, BUT FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS PURPOSES IT IS USEFUL TO ASSERT THAT THIS IS ONE OF FMG'S CONCERNS.

3. REASONS WHY PARTICULAR COMMISSIONERS WERE REMOVED: WITH POSSIBLE EXCEPTIONS OF EKUKINAM AND FINGESI NONE OF THE OUSTED COMMISSIONERS WERE NOTED FOR COMPETENCE OR ACCOMPLISMENT. AKOBO WAS ALMOST TOTAL LOSS. HARUNA WAS REPORTEDLY DRINKING HEAVILY AND PAYING NO ATTENTION TO HIS DUTIES AT MINISTRY OF INFORMATION. OBADA WAS TAINTED BY CORRUPTION AND UNDER CONTINUING CLOUD FOR FAILURE OF HIS FORMER 4TH DIVISION TROOPS TO REACT WELL TO EVENTS OF FEBRARY 13, 1976. EKUKINAM WAS TAINTED BY WELL-PUBLICIZED DIVORCE SUIT AND POSSIBLE NEPOTISM SCANDAL ARISING OUT OF HIS EXTRA-MARITAL ACTIVITIES. (EKUKINAM'S GIRLFRIEND WILL

REPORTEDLY BE DEMOTED FROM JOB THE COMMISSIONER GOT FOR HER
AT NIGERIAN SECURIT PRINTING AND MINTING CORPORATION).

4. EMBASSY CAN ESTABLISH NO CLEAR REASONS FOR REMOVAL OF MINES
AND POWER COMMISSIONER EKONG OR SOCIIAL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONER
OLUTOYE. BOTH WERE PLEASANT BUT UNDYNAMIC GENTLEMEN. MAJGEN
OLUTOYE SEEMS TO HAVE HAD NO CONNECTION WITH MALCONTENTS LIKE
HARUNA. HE WAS OLDEST ACTIVE DUTY OFFICER IN NIGERIAN ARMY, AND
MAY SIMPLY HAVE BEEN READY TO RETIRE. WITH END OF FESTAC, FINGESI'S
POSITION WAS ABOLISHED AND HE RETURNED TO REGULAR NAVY. FINGESI
IS SCHEDULED ATTEND U.S. NAVAL WAR COLLEGE, NEWPORT, R.I. IT IS
NOT CLEAR WHETHER SMC APPRECIATED OR CARED THAT DEPARTURE
OF SEVEN-AT-ONE-BLOW WOULD GIVE IMPRESSION THAT ALL WERE SACKED.

5. AVAILABLE BIO INFORMATION ON NEW COMMISSIONERS FOLLOWS BY
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Message Attributes

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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 17-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Remarks:
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TAGS: PGOV, PINR, NI, SMC, (OLULEYE, JAMES)
To: STATE
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